

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough consideration provided in the present application. Applicants also appreciate the courtesies of the interview conducted with Applicants representative on March 2, 2004 discussing the cancellation of claims 1-8 and 16 and the rewriting of this subject matter as dependent claims 24-28 upon allowable claim 12.

Claims 12-16 and 19-28 are currently pending in the instant application. No claims have been amended by way of this response. Claims 12, 19 and 22 are independent. Claims 24-28 have been added. Applicants submit that these additional claims are fully supported by the original written description, including but not limited to the original claims and FIGs. 1-7. Reconsideration of the present application is earnestly solicited.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter. Specifically, claims 12-15 and 19-23 have been allowed by the Examiner. As described in greater detail hereinafter, Applicants submit that the remaining claims should also be allowed and the present application should be passed to Issue. Specifically, claims 1-8 have been cancelled by this

Amendment. In addition, Applicants have rewritten features of original claims 1, 3, 6, 7 and 16 as additional dependent claims 24-28, respectively. Accordingly, all of the claims of the present application should be allowed and the present application should be passed to Issue.

Reasons for Entry of Amendment

As discussed in greater detail hereinafter, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 have been obviated and/or rendered moot. If the present application is not passed to Issue, Applicants submit that the finality of the Final Office Action mailed on October 3, 2003 should be withdrawn.

Applicants submit that the foregoing amendments to the claims have been made to reduce issues for appeal and should be entered. Specifically, claims 1-8 and 16 have been cancelled. In addition, dependent claims 24-28 do not present new issues as they claims are dependent upon an allowable base claim and are clearly supported by the original written description.

Oath/Declaration

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of a defective declaration. Applicants submit that it appears the Examiner may be referring to the changes to the address under inventor Jason A. Kay on page 3 of the Declaration. Accordingly, Applicants have submitted a supplemental declaration concurrently herewith resubmitting the proper mailing address and signature for this inventor. Accordingly, this objection has been obviated and/or rendered moot. If additional or alternative changes are required by the Examiner, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned via telephone in the Washington, DC area.

Drawings

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's approval of the drawing corrections filed on July 18, 2003. Applicants have previously submitted two (2) sheets of formal drawings incorporating the changes to FIGs. 2 and 3 approved by the Examiner as an attachment to the response filed on February 3, 2003. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned immediately if any further issues remain with respect to the drawings.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Doty (U.S. Patent No. 3,293,018). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Without conceding the propriety of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to expedite the prosecution of the present application, this claim has been cancelled. Accordingly, this rejection has been rendered moot and the present application should be passed to Issue.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-4, 6-8 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Zauner (U.S. Patent No. 4,444,908) in view of Novini (U.S. Patent No. 4,095,204). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In light of the foregoing amendments to the claims, Applicants submit that this rejection has been obviated and/or rendered moot. Specifically, without conceding the propriety of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to expedite the prosecution of the present application, claims 1-8 and 16 have been cancelled. Therefore, this rejection has been rendered moot and the present application should be passed to Issue.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the claim rejection are respectfully requested. Moreover, the Applicants respectfully submit that the instant application is in a condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but rather to merely show the state-of-the-art, no further comments are necessary with respect thereto.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Matthew T. Shanley, Registration No. 47,074 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Applicants respectfully petition under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) and § 1.17 for a two-month extension of time in which to respond to the Examiner's Office Action. The Extension of Time Fee in the amount of **\$310.00** is attached hereto.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1602 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Supplemental Declaration